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ABSTRACT

The story of Alejandro Juarez, Jr., a Mexican American youth, and his family's experiences in the parochial and public schools of Chicago (Illinois) portrays the problems that bilingual and bicultural children and their parents face. A further dimension was added by Alejandro's learning problems, which further complicated an already complex and frustrating relationship with the school system. The story begins when Alejandro is a shy and sweet fifth grader struggling with English and reading. As he progressed through school, from the parochial elementary school to a public high school, he encountered stereotyping and bias, difficulties with language, and the complications of his own difficulties with learning that made his school life even harder than the lives of his siblings. The support his family and his elementary school English-as-a-Second-Language teacher offered him were enough to keep Alejandro in school to a point. His eventual dropping out demonstrates that the devotion of a family is not enough when the school system is so filled with obstacles. (Contains 62 references.) (SLD)

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